



Fossilized Textiles

Belford, P., & Morrow, R. (2009). Fossilized Textiles. In *Unknown Host Publication* Kingston University London. http://www.kingston.ac.uk/fada/designresearch/Conferences_Events.html

[Link to publication record in Ulster University Research Portal](#)

Published in:
Unknown Host Publication

Publication Status:
Published (in print/issue): 24/06/2009

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Integration of Design and Science - Light, Materials, Colour and Environment

Abstract: **Fossilized Textiles**

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This Poster will present the current outcomes of an ongoing project, Tactility Factory (TF); a collaboration between a textile designer and an architect. Conceptually TF sets the utopian challenge of **bringing together hard and soft materials** (in the case of one product range **girli concrete**, 'hard' is represented by concrete and 'soft' by textile technologies) and it starts from an understanding that most Built Environment elements and materials are designed only to meet technical performance specifications. In contrast TF focuses as much on the human 'performance', (beauty, sensuality and in particular, tactility) as the technical.

The project also questions Architecture's celebration of technology to the point where it can and often does dominate, becoming the first and last interface that the user has with the building. In contrast, interacting with a textile is a personal and unique *cosy, cuddly, slippy, scratchy, warm* encounter. It is the remarkable achievement of textile designers to take 'hard-core' technologies and transform them into something that evokes intimate physical and emotive reactions.

Tactility Factory through its product range – girli concrete, learns from this and finds resonance in the words of Peter Rice, *"...make real the presence of the material in use in the building, so that people warm to them, want to touch them, feel a sense of the material itself and of the people who made and designed it."* (Rice [1994])

After 3.5 years development, the last 3 months have seen the project generate several patents, complete 3 commissions and win several awards – the uniqueness of the outcomes (see girliconcrete.blogspot.com) means that TF is well supported to move forward to spin-out company status. Tactility Factory **aims to mainstream tactility in the built environment**, whilst it may sound utopian it helps drive and guide the project even within the restraints of research and business plan funding!



fig 1:concrete panel with linen and stitched surface (Tactility Factory © 2009)